BASIC EDUCATION

A FRESH LOOK

BASIC EDUCATION RE-EXAMINED
IN THE LIGHT OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION, 1966
REPORT OF THE STUDY GROUP

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FOREWORD

This report is an outcome of the deliberations of a study group which was formed by the Department of Basic education to re-examine the principles and programmes of Basic education in the light of the recommendations of the Education Commission (1966). It is hoped that it will be of immense help to the educational thinkers and administrators particularly at this critical time when major decisions are being taken with a view to revitalising the educational system of the country.

I am grateful to the members of the study group for their kind cooperation and the pains they took in conducting the deliberations inspite of many inconveniences. I am particularly grateful to Shri R. K. Gupta, Research Assistant of this Department who very efficiently organised the meetings of the Study Group and supplied all the background materials at a very short notice. He helped me immensely in preparing the final report.

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A FRESH LOOK AT THE CONCEPT OF BASIC EDUCATION-REPORT OF THE STUDY GROUP

Introduction

The scheme of Basic education has been enjoying the status of an accepted National pattern of education at the Elementary stage during the post independence period. The programmes and approaches suggested by the scheme were conceded to be psychologically, pedagogically and socially sound by various committees including the Central Advisory Board of Education.

Indeed Gandhiji's idea of Nai Talim or New Education of which Basic Education is a stage, is the first attempt in this country to relate education to social progress, national development, economic development with employment for all, national solidarity and universal brotherhood of man kind-a need which has been strongly emphasised by the Education Commission (1966). Basic Education was not merely an idea, or a concept. It was a well thought out workable scheme of education for all.

Unfortunately inspite of the fact that it has been in practice since thirty years, all its ideas have not taken firm root, although its influence is to be seen in almost all the school systems of this country and even in other developing countries. Moreover there is perceptible resistance to some of its aspects. A dynamic concept like Basic Education has fallen into rut, into ritualistic and unimaginative and stereo-typed practices, due to bad planning and faulty implementation and an inadequate research and experimentation base. As a result educational thinkers to-day are expressing doubts about the relvance of this system of Education to to-day's society.

The education Commission has recently submitted its report to streamline the system of education in the country and has made far reaching recommendations for the school stage including the Elementary education stage. It has accepted the fundamental principles of Basic education as sound but has not favoured the retention of the name 'Basic' for any stage of education. At the same time it has suggested some modifications in the programmes and approaches of the scheme. An urgent need was, therefore, felt to re-examine the concept of Basic education with a view to bringing Basic education in line with the needs and aspirations of modern times.

With this purpose in view the Department of Basic Education (National Council of Educational Research and Training) formed a study group comprising of locally available persons who had worked in the field of Basic education. The study group had four sessions of three hours each on the 8th, 9th and 12th June 1967 in the Department of Basic Education to deliberate upon the issues raised in the working paper. Besides the issues that were raised in the working paper, various other questions came up for consideration. The background of these deliberations and the issues discussed are presented in this report along with the summary of discussions. The report has been divided into four areas relating to :

(a) The goals of Education,

(b) The principles of curriculum construction and methods of teaching,

(c) The place of work in education and

(d) The duration of elementary education and its place in the total school education.

1.0 : ISSUES RELATING TO THE GOALS OF EDUCATION

Basic education was formulated to serve as a spearhead for the evolution of a new cooperative social order based on Truth, Non violence and Justice. In the evolution of the new social order Gandhiji gave the pride of place to the growth of the village economy through handicrafts, cooperation and cottage industries. In the post independence era, however, the Nation has been trying to industrialise and modernise itself rapidly. The Education Commistion (1966) while reviewing the emerging needs of the country has emphasised the need for (a) achieving self sufficiency in food, (b) achieving economic growth and full employment, (c) social and national integration and (d) the stabilisation of democracy. With a view to accomplish these national tasks the Commission has laid emphasis on (a) the development of physical resources through the modernisation of agriculture and rapid industrialisation with the help of science based technology, heavy capital formation and investment and the essential infra-structures and (b) the development of human resources. Along with this emphasis on rapid economic growth and modernisation with the help of science based technology the Commission has pointed out the urgent need to bring about a fusion between science and Ahimsa, which is considered to be the supreme challenge to Education.

The group, therefore, examined the following issues :

(1) Assuming that the goals given by the Education Commission are acceptable in the present context, do they significantly differ from the concept of the new social order envisaged by Basic education.

(2) With the growing emphasis on science based technology and rapid industrialisation can we hope to cherish the value system given to us by our cultural heritage ?

(3) What modifications, if, any, are needed in the programmes of Basic education so that it can fulfil the needs of our times ?

Summary of Discussion

Considering the social goals underlying the system of Basic education, as conceived by Gandhiji, and those in the context of which the Education Commission was working. the group felt that there was no difference between the two. Difference arose in the manner in which these goals were to be reached. Gandhiji felt that first of all the people must be put to work at the level of technology that they knew and the resources that were at their command. Science must be used to improve this technology but in a manner that it did not displace labour. Large industries were to play only a residual role and the extent to which they were absolutely necessary, they should be socially controlled by the democratic state. The trend of the five year plans and the thinking of the Education Commission, however, was that we must begin with large scale industry here and now. Ultimately the overall economic growth would ensure full employment. The Planning Commission had tried to meet unemployment in the meantime through expanding crafts and cottage industries. It was beyond the scope of this group to go into the relative merits, the rationality and the consistency of the two approaches. As education had to serve the overall goals, the relevant question was whether basic education served the goals and approaches of society as visualised to-day. So far as the development of the rural economy was concerned, it had to be agriculture, handicrafts and cottage industry based, for a considerable time to come as it would be difficult to absorb the entire rural population in large scale industries. Craft-based education at the elementary stage consequently was in perfect harmony with social needs. Even at the secondary stage, while it would be necessary to acquaint the students with the industrial processes and environment, by and large work experience would in actual practice remain largely confined to agriculture and the basic crafts on account of dearth of resources and technical teachers etc. It was further noted that even where the skill in craft was not the ultimate aim, its practice in the early classes would provide excellent grounding for the learning of more complicated skills required by industrialisation.

The group then considered the value system discernible from the two sets of goals and felt that the values advocated by Basic Education were those of cooperation, tolerance, respect for human dignity irrespective of his class, creed or status and the ethical and human values which bring men closer to one another. It was felt that if India was to give a lead for the fusion of Science with Ahimsa, which was in keeping with its cultural heritage, these values have to be increasingly emphasised in this scientific age so as to overcome the evil effects of technological growth as evidenced in the Western Countries. It was felt that with the growing emphasis on industrial and technological growth in the country what had to be ensured was that man may not become servant of machines and that the wild race for acquisition of power both economic and social and concentrating it in fewer hands did not produce machanical roborts.

The group was of the view that Basic education is more relevant to-day than it was in 1937, when the idea was given by Mahatmaji, because the value system inherent in its concept can successfully counteract the disintegrating forces that tend to operate beneath the programme of industrial development and because Basic education provides that essential and fundamental training in the formative years. The group however felt that new values and attitudes were actually emerging and a cultural transformation was taking place in present-day society: These new emerging values had to be taken account of, to the extent they were in harmony with our social goals by Basic education in its programmes and practices. These values the group felt, needed to be very carefully spelt out in clear and operational terms.

One of the major needs in the scientific age which concerned education was the development of scientific outlook among the people at large, so that life could be lived more rationally and comfortably through the use of scientific knowledge. Foundations for the development of a scientific attitude must have to be laid in the formative years. Moreover to be meaningful, scientific content and its method had to be placed in direct relation to the interest and problem of daily living. Did Basic education fulfil this task ? This issue was analysed at great length. The group felt that it was Basic education which for the first time in this country recognised the importance of correlating knowledge to daily living. Basic education, the group felt, was a very potent vehicle to lay the foundation of the scientific mind as it emphasised the problem solving technique and inductive-deductive approach in the learning process and on the development of curiosity, of ability to observe and to generalise from observed facts, which are key things in the development of the scientific attitude. Above all Basic education prepared the mind of the child to use science not only in his own life but for the good of all men -a need which was so much urgent in this explosive age. The group therefore came to the conclusion that Basic education could successfully lay the foundation of a true scientific spirit and could pave the way for harmonising science with Ahimsa.

The group felt that the four urgent national needs viz. self sufficiency in food, national and social integration, rapid econmic growth and full employment and the stabilisation of democracy, emphasised by the Education Commission, had also been adequately reflected in the programmes of basic education with the difference that it did not envisage large scale industrialisation as a means of attaining our social goals. The group felt that this need was fairly well accepted and had therefore to be taken note of in the programmes of Basic education. It was therefore suggested that necessary modifications in these programmes might be made to meet the requirements of this emerging need. And that was not impossible. For as Gandhiji said that basic education was the bridge between him and the pucca industrialists.

Conclusions

(1) The goals set before Basic education and those given by the Education Commission are not in conflict with each other.

(2) To achieve the fusion between science and Ahimsa the values cherished by Basic education have to be increasingly emphasized and to that extent Basic education was considered to be of greater relevance in the present age. The new values that are emerging need spelling out in details and they have to be harmoniously blended with the value system inherent in Basic education, which again is in compelete agreement with our national goals as given by our constitution.

(3) Basic education was not opposed to industrialisation but the emerging needs of industrial and technological growth have to be reflected in its programmes aud approaches.

2.0 : ISSUES RELATING TO THE APPROACH IN CURRICULUM PLANNING AND METHODS OF TEACHING :

The curriculum in Basic education is thought of in terms of activities and experiences related to living a life in the community. It is life centric in the sense that it gives high priority to the developmental needs of children, their natural urges and interests and that it has social direction. It frees the child from the tyranny of a rigid book centred approach to learning and advocates active participation of children in the learning process. What the child learns in Basic education is learnt in relationship to work, his social and natural environment. The curriculum is, therefore, thought of in terms of activities and experiences and not in terms of water tight compartments of subjects and this curriculum is built up day by day through the process of correlation with life and living. Flexibility in the curriculum is, therefore, an essential characteristic of Basic Curriculum.

The approach however, has been found to be difficult by teachers partly because of their poor equipment and partly because it demands moving away from the routine approach of book learning to adopting a creative approach to organising teaching-learning situation. The Education Commission has accepted the fundamental worthwhileness of the approach but in view of the 'explosion of knowledge' and the great need for fostering the growth of science and technology has laid emphasis on the development of concepts from a very early stage with the adoption of 'dynámic' techniques of teaching. To meet these needs it has recommended the structuring of the courses of study into separate subject areas right from the III grade onward. The questions for consideration before the group were :

(1) Despite explosion of knowledge should we still follow the integrated approach to teaching or should we shift to the formal discipline approach advocated by the Education Commission ?

(2) What is the scope of correlated teaching in a discipline oriented curriculum ? To what extent can it be used ?

Summary of Discussion

The discussion started with an elucidation of the concept of life centric education. It was observed that life-centric approach implied making education meaningful, purposeful and socially directed. It laid emphasis on the principle of doing and experiencing. That did not however, mean that the systematisation of knowledge was to be ignored. Activities and the correlated teaching has to be so planned that the knowledge given at any time is related to the knowledge already given, and if certain essential knowledge is still left out, it can always be given through direct teaching. Only when the technique of correlation is perfected, these occasions will be very rare. With this elucidation the group considered the implication of the 'explosion of knowledge' with particular raference to the elementary stage and felt that it would not affect the learning situation because in the formative stage the child has to be acquainted with the social and natural phenomena around him and the fundamental concepts have to be developed to facilitate further development. Explosion of knowledge, therefore, affected education at the elementary stage to the extent that it affected life in general and the concensus of opinion was that it would take a long time before it affected life of the people at large ; and to the extent that it did, it would naturally come within the perview of Basic education.

Therefore, it was felt that there was no case for giviug up the integrated approach at the elementary stage because of the explosion of knowledge'.

The group then considered the relative merits of the two approaches in building up the concepts. The problem posed at this stage was whether or not knowledge had a structure which the moment it was dismantled it led to the lowering of the quality of learning. It was argued that the correlated technique of teaching resulted in leaving gaps in the structure of systematic knowledge and to that extent it not only stood in the way of an early development of concepts but also in providing systematic knowledge which was the key concept in the discipline approach to learning. The counter argument that followed was that concepts underlay processes and phenomena and could best be understood in relation to them. They could best be developed through making the child understand 'the why and where-fore' of all learning. The child could feel motivated to learn and understand things better when put in a situation where the acquisition of knowlege became his felt need. The approach of Basic education was to expose the child gradually to various life situations which motivated learning through self effort. The life centric approach was thus a much better approach for the development of concepts. Finally the group reached the consensus that the approach of Basic education was sound and had to be continued. There was no inherent contradiction between the needs of disintegerating systematic knowledge to relate relevant portions of it to the activity in hand and the necessity of systematised knowledge. Through proper planning of lessons and careful selection of activities and the elements of subject knowledge to be correlated, it was possible and necessary to combine the advantages of systematised knowledge and the correlation approach and till such time that the teachers were able to do this, gaps in knowledge could always be filled through direct teaching. As our techniques develop, the number of such occassions would be progressively reduced.

While considering the method of teaching it was observed that the technique of correlation was in no way in conflict with the approach in curriculum construction as indicated above. Correlation has been by now considered as a one way process of weaving knowledge around experiences relating to three centres of correlation. The group felt that the practical approach would be to make it a two way process where learning will take place both by inductive and deductive tochnique. It was explained that whereas the child should be given the opportunity to acquire new knowledge in relation to the solution of the problems that he faces in the domain of work, he should also be encouraged to try out and apply his learnings in different subjects in the field of work and play. Although some members felt that this was already implied in the technique of correlation, there was no unanimity of opinion on the point. The group however accepted it as the most suitable and practicable approach. This would therefore mean giving emphasis to the importance of activity and experience in the learning process on the part of the children and adoption of a combination of methods including correlated teaching which help children in understanding relationship in problem solving and in getting systematic knowledge related to different subject fields, at the same time.

Conclusions :

(1) There was enough vitality in the basic system of education to absorb the stock of new ideas —'the explosion of knowledge—to the extent that they affected the life of the people in general or were related to natural phenomenon of the mechanical craft processes.

(2) The integrated approach to curriculum development has to be continued as it does not stand in the way of concept formation, rather it facilitates assimilation of knowledge and makes learning meaningful, functional and purposive. However; while following this approach, the importance of giving systematic knowledge should not be ignored.

(3) The technique of correlation had to be so developed that it should be a two way process promoting inductive and deductive

learning. This would mean that knowledge would become a direct outcome of activity and experience and the knowledge that was gained including that gathered through formalised instruction, should be applied to concrete life situations so that its functional use could become still clearer.

3.0 : ISSUES RELATING TO THE PLACE OF WORK IN EDUCATION :

It is increasingly being recognised that mere spread of literacy cannot be the sole aim of education. Basic education which emphasised a life centric approach in Curriculum aims at utilising life experiences of the child in education. With a view to making education functional and purposeful and to developing qualities of good citizenship for the new social order, it aims at the development of proper attitudes and habits among the younger generation. To achieve these objectives it emphasises the participation of the students in manual work relating to crafts, community living ond social service activities. Work is actually at the hard core of this education. Participation in community living and social service is emphasised to give social direction to personality development with a view to achieving social integration. Craft programme is emphasised with a view to establishing a link between education and the world of work. The three basic human needs of Food, Clothing and Shelter are emphasised in the selection of Crafts with a view to solving our basic problems. At the same time the selection of Crafts takes into consideration the richness of the Crafts in educational potentialities and the availability of the raw materials in the neighbourhood. Intelligent participation of the children in the three types of work programmes viz. crafts, community living and social service to the community outside the school was not only aimed at for developing proper habits and attitudes for work but was primarily to be used for the total education of the child.

It is assumed that intelligent participation of children in socially useful and productive manual work will be able to develop a sense of respect for work and the worker and would be able to break through the craze for white collar jobs which is the result of traditional education. It is also hoped that this intelligent participation would also have far reaching consequences for bringing about improvements in the modes of production and living through the growth of new practices and approaches in these spheres.

In practice, however, due to wrong implementation the spirit of intelligent participation got lost sight of in our zeal for devising short cuts and manual work had degenerated into mere routine and mechanical drab. This unhappy development also owes part of its responsibility to the inadequate equipment of our teachers who could not effectively organise and utilise these programmes for educational purposes as well as to bad supervision and lack of guidance. During recent years with the progress of the country on the path of industrialisation, the craft programme has particularly been objected to with the apprehension that it is not in tune with the emerging needs of the country.

The Education Commission has accepted all the objectives put forward by Basic Education in giving a place to work in education. It has however, been observed that there is a need to give a 'forward look' to the craft programme wherein the spirit of science and technology has to be increasingly built in its processes. The commission has given the concept of 'work experience' with a view to give breadth to this programme by making a provision for the participation of children in work in real life situations. At the same time it has not favoured the utilisation of work experience as the medium of education except for the incidental educational benefits that may accrue from it. Even then the Commission has observed that work experience should form an integral part of all education at the school stage.

The issues before the study group, therefore, were :

(1) Does the concept of work experience deviate significantly from the programmes suggested in Basic education ?

(2) Will it be desirable to give up the approach of utilising experiences of the children in the domain of work for educational purposes and if so can work experience become an integral part of education ?

(3) In view of the changing conditions in the country what changes have to be made in the craft programme as pursued in Basic education ?

(4) Can we hope to achieve all the objectives through the programme of work experience as suggested by the Commission and also how far the ptogramme itself is practicable ?

Summary of the Discussion :

The group examined the concept of work experience as given by the Commission. The emphasis laid by the Commission on relating education to productivity in making these recommendations was noted and it was observed that it was a reiteration of the stand that Basic education had taken 30 years ago. The group felt that the concept of work-experience differed from the approach in Basic education in so far as it was not to be used as the medium of education except for incidental educational gains that may accrue from it. This is a major deviation, even though the Education Commission stated that it had accepted the fundamentals of Basic education.

In giving thought to the attainment of objectives through the suggested programme of work experience, the group felt that the organisation of the programme had not been clearly specified. There was an apprehension that it might mean more of observation and unmotivated participation in some mechanical processes of work. On the other hand, the programme in Basic education, it was noted, laid emphasis on the intelligent and self-directed participation of children in work which would need purposing, planning, executing and evaluating their own work. The group, therefore, felt that the programmes of work experience may not lead to the attainment of some of the most important social objectives as bridging the gulf between men and the development of the proper attitudes towards the dignity of labour. It was further felt that the approach of Basic education was a sounder one particularly for the growth of the scientific outlook which is so much necessary for our industrial growth as it provided opportunities to the child to know the why and wherefore of the participation in different kinds of activities. Work improves, becomes interesting and provides motivation only when you enter into the why and wherefor of its processes.

The question of whether or not the experiences in work should be utilised for educational purposes by the teachers was considered. It was felt that it was a sound approach to provide opportunities to the children for inductive and deductive learning. Whereas there should be provision to seek the solution of problems being faced in the domain of work through learning newer facts, there has also to be a provision for trying out new learning in the domain of work to establish a functional relationship between learning and living. It would, therefore, be necessary to continue with the approach of utilising experiences of work for educational purposes instead of leaving it to mere incidental learning. At the same time it was felt that it may not be necessary to stick to the policy of providing all education through such experiences as it does not appear to be practicable in the vast majority of our schools under the present conditions.

The group then considered the need for giving a 'forward look' to the crafts programme of Basic education. It was felt that it should not mean a mere building up of the spirit of science and technology in the processes of work thereby making the process of work mainly mechanical, as suggested by the Commission but should instead have a wider implication in that the growth of a scientific outlook should be fostered by intelligent and creative participation in work. In this context it was felt that the craft programme of Basic education had a built-in provision for the 'Forward look' in its approach which needs to be retained even if some more types of work involving technological processes are included in the programme to meet the present day needs of industrial development. It was of course felt that the needs of industrial growth could not be ignored and to that extent the scope of the activities must have to be widened. The impact of industrial growth is not wide spread as yet. It may not be desirable, therefore, to give up the rural handicrafts from the crafts programme. The group reached consensus on the need to retain the existing crafts and to include some more activities with technological base in the programme of work which should be pursued intelligently and not mere mechanically. The group also observed that in the Curriculum of elementary education even in industrially developed countries, crafts like wood-work, metal-work, weaving, pottery etc. find their legitimate place, because the child at that age is not able to handle anything other wise, especially as a total process.

The next point to be considered was the need to extend the scope of work to provide participation in work in the real life situations. It was argued that under the present conditions in the country it was not widely feasible to arrange participation in work in farms, factories etc. It was also argued that many constraints as the distance between the school and the place of work, the difficulties of organisation, the motivation of the children for work of different kinds would stand in the way of proper implementation of this concept. The group felt the need for participation in work in real life situations particularly in the case of children of higher age groups and therefore recommended provision of such opportunities where conditions permit.

CONCLUSIONS :

1. The craft programme of Basic education needs to be widened to include various other crafts suited to the needs of the urban and industrialised areas.
2. Emphasis should be laid on intelligent participation of the children in different programmes of work instead of mere observation or routine participation.
3. The educational opportunities provided by the crafts programme should be fully utilised.

4. Provision for work should be made in the school campus and wherever possible participation of children in real life situations may be encouraged.
5. Work experience should involve purposeful manual work and participation in community activities in the school, in crafts and social service to the community.

4.0 : ISSUES RELATING TO THE DURATION OF BASIC EDUCATION

Originally, Basic education was conceived as a programme of seven year's universal compulsory education for the children in age group 7-14. The Kher Committee considered the age of seven to be too late to introduce the child to the school and recommended eight years of Basic education for the age group 6-14. Development of pre-vocational skills was considered as an essential purpose of general education in these formaltive years. The Education Commission, however, has recommended seven or eight years of primary education with two stages viz; lower primary and upper primary having classes I-IV or V and IV or V to VII or VIII. Thus the Education Commission has not suggested a common structure of Primary Education. The Education Commission in its ten years programme of general education also envisages separate vocational courses for those who give up education after 7 or 8 years, The group considered the following issues in this regard :

1. What should be the duration of Basic Education particularly in view of the compulsory education programme ? should there be stages in Basic Education ?
2. What place would the seven or eight year course have in the total ten-year programme of general education as recommended by the Education Commission ?
3. When all the fundamental principales of Basic education have been considered to be sound, is it desirable to drop the name 'Basic' ?

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

While discussing the group took into consideration the following for arriving at a consensus :

1. The Education Commission has recommended a ten-year course of general education to be followed by a diversified course in the 11th and 12th years. This period of general education will consist of 7 or 8 years of compulsory education upto the age of 14 years.

2. Basic education as it is practised today covers the elementary stage and is a eight-year period of general education co-terminus with the compulsory age.
3. The standard of education in this eight-year period was to be equivalent to the original Matriculation Examination minus English and plus Craft, a standard which has not yet been achieved.
4. For quite a large number of children, Basic Education is a terminal stage. These dropouts enter into world of work either as unskilled workers or are absorbed as skilled persons with further training.
5. Development is a continuous process and it takes 8 to 10 years of early education so that skills, habits and attitudes are so stablished that they offer a sound base for good life. Developing minds should be kept under educational influence for an optimum period of time which should not be less than 8 to 10 years.
6. In any good programme of elementary education the needs of those who do not go beyond the elementary stage and of those who are higher education bound must be taken into consideration. Although vocational education cannot be mixed up with general education, some vocational element and training in citizenship must have to be introduced in elementary education to fulfil the need cited above.

With this background the group considered the desirability of dropping the name 'Basic' as suggested by the Education Commission and felt that when the fundamentals of Basic education are all accepted, it is logical to retain the name particularly because the Education Commission has not stated the grounds on which it is proposed to be dropped. The group was of the opinion that whatever good work has been done so far by way of improving elementary education would receive a great set-back if the name is dropped. It was felt that it will create confusion in the minds of those who are working in the field of of Basic education. The group felt that India's contribution to education in the form of Basic education is well recognised throught the world and it would, therefore, be not desirable to drop the name. What is necessary is to extend the name and the concept of Basic education to the entire general education course proposed by the Education Commission and to draw a practical plan of implementation so that whetever resistance to the name 'Basic' are discernible may be overcome.

With a view to extending the name and the concept of Basic education the group felt that since general education had to be continued upto grade X in terms of the Education Commission's recommendations, it was only desirable to extend Basic education up to the 10th grade. This will not only bring about uniformity in the structure of general education and thereby avoid complications and confusions but would also make transfer of children from the compulsory stage to the higher classes easier and natural.

Considering the need for articulation in the structure of the ten year course, the group took note of the fact that the principles of Basic education require Basic schools to be organised as productive and cooperative and self-relient communities of children of age group 6-14. Although this requires Basic schools to be organised as an integrated community for the entire age group, yet practical difficulties have not allowed so far to organise all Basic schools as complete Basic schools for this age group particularly in small communities and two stages viz. Junior and Senior Basic have come into existence. The group felt that apart from practical considerations, there is a case for segregating the age-group 6-11 from the pre-adolescent and adolescent children as their growth needs are distinctly different from those of the latter. The group therefore recommended that it may be desirable to have three types of Basic schools viz. Junior Basic with classes I—V, Senior Basic with classes VI to X and Complete Basic schools with classes I—X.

CONCLUSIONS.

1. The duration of Basic education should be extended to 10 years. This period of ten years may be articulated into two stages viz. Junior Basic and Senior Basic with grades I-V and VI-X respectively.

2. Basic education thus conceived need not be coterminus with the stage of compulsory education.

3. The name 'Basic' should not be dropped. The following nomenclature was suggested for the Basic schools :

    (a) Junior Basic school — I—V
    (b) Senior Basic school — VI—X
    (c) Basic school — I—X

5.0 : SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1.1 The goals set before Basic education and those given by the Education Commission are not in conflict with each other.

1.2 To achieve the fusion between science and Ahimsa the values cherished by Basic education have to be increasingly emphasized and to that extent Basic education was considered to be of greater relevance in the present age. The new values that are emerging need spelling out in details and they have to be harmoniously blended with the value system inherent in Basic education, which again is in complete agreement with our national goals as given by our constitution.

1.3 Basic education was not opposed to industrialisation but the emerging needs of industrial and technological growth have to be reflected in its programmes and approaches.

2.1 There was enough vitality in the Basic system of education to absorb the stock of new ideas—'the explosion of knowledge'—to the extent that they affected the life of the people in general or were related to natural phenomenon or the mechanical craft process.

2.2 The integrated approach to curriculum development has to be continued as it does not stand in the way of concept formation rather it facilitates assimilation of knowledge and makes learning meaningful, functional and purposive. However, while following this approach, the importance of giving systematic knowledge should not be ignored.

2.3 The technique of correlation had to be so developed that it should be a two way process promoting inductive and deductive learning. This would mean that knowledge would become a direct outcome of activity and experience and the knowledge that was gained including that gathered through formalised instruction, should be applied to concrete life situations so that its functional use could become still clearer.

3.1 The craft programme of Basic education needs to be widened to include various other crafts suited to the needs of the urban and industrialised areas.

3.2 Emphasis should be laid on intelligent participation of the children in different programmes of work instead of mere observation or routine participation.

3.3 The educational opportunities provided by the crafts programme should be fully utilised.

3.4 Provision for work should be made in the school campus and wherever possible participation of children in real life situations may be encouraged.

3.5 Work experience should involve purposeful manual work and participation in community activities in the school in crafts and social service to the community.

4.1 The duration of Basic education should be extended to 10 years. This period of ten years may be articulated into two stages viz. Junior Basic and Senior Basic with grades I-V and VI-X respectively.

4.2 Basic education thus conceived need not be co-terminus with the stage of compulsory education.

4.3 The name 'Basic' should not be dropped. The following nomenclature was suggested for the Basic schools :

(a) Junior Basic school	I-V
(b) Senior Basic school	VI-X
(c) Basic school	I-X

APPENDIX-I

WORKING PAPER FOR THE STUDY GROUP FOR RE-EXAMINING BASIC EDUCATION

(*June 8-12-1967*)

1. Basic education is so far the accepted National pattern of Education at the elementary stage. The committee for the assessment of Basic education observed that there was no agreement amongst educationists on the programmes and approaches of Basic education and stressed the need for elucidating the concept of Basic education. Consequently the Ministry of Education issued a brochure clarifying the concept of Basic Education with the hope that this would help in the smooth progress of Basic education in the country. Of late a feeling is growing that certain aspects of Basic education are resisted either because of their impracticability for want of resources both material and human or due to misunderstandings. The current situation, therefore, suggests the need for rethinking on some of the important and fundamental aspects of Basic education in view of the changing conditions in the country. The Education Commission (1966) has also given consideration to the emerging needs in Education with reference to the national goals and national development and has recommended a pattern of school education. This study group has been formed with a view to examining Basic education in the light of the relevant recommendations of the Education Commission and difficulties that are confronted in the way of its implementation.

2. The goal set before Basic education was the evolution of a new social order based on Truth, Nonviolence and Justice. It aimed at developing a specific value system based on cooperation and fellow feeling, tolerance and a freedom for all to grow according to their capacities through the eradication of the social and economic barriers. The development of the culture of the 'Heart' to achieve the "goodness in man" was, therefore, given predominance over his material possessions and the training of the 'Head' or the 'Hand'. During the recent years a feeling has been growing that the concept of the Social order envisaged thirty years ago has undergone a considerable change. The Education Commission has very specifically stated the National objectives to be (a) to achieve Self Sufficiency in Food (b) to achieve economic growth and full employment (c) social and national integra-

tion and (d) the stabilisation of Democracy. To achieve these goals in the quickest of time, it, therefore, lays emphasis on (a) the Development of physical resources through the modernisation of Agriculture and rapid industrialisation with the help of Science based technology, heavy capital formation and investment and the essential infrastructures and (b) the development of human resources. (1.12). It has also reiterated its faith in the value system propounded by our great seers and has said that India should try to bring about a synthesis between Science and 'Ahimsa'.

It has now to be examined whether the goals accepted by the commission significantly deviate from the concept of the New social order envisaged by Basic Education and whether with the emphasis on science based technology and rapid industrialisation, we can hope to cherish the value system put before us by our cultural heritage? It has to be further examined whether through the existing or slightly modified programmes of Basic education we can achieve the National goals set elaborately by the Education Commission? It might also be considered desirable to examine the implications of the fusion between Ahimsa and science with a view to adopting proper approach for its emergence so far as it relates to curriculum planning.

3. Basic education advocated a life-centric approach in curriculum construction. The mainfestation of life in the domain of work, social and natural settings were accepted for utilisation in the building up of the curriculum. Knowledge was conceived of as an integrated whole in contrast to the prevalent water tight compartmentalisation into different subject areas. Obviously it was not possible to achieve this end with the help of the traditional methods. The technique of correlation was, therefore, emphasised. This method helped in the development of an inquisitive mind with capacity to perceive relations between life and learning. This approach was considered to be sound from the Psychological, Pedagogical and Sociological points of view. This implied giving the teacher the main responsibility and the freedom to construct the curriculum according to the local needs. The Education Commission has however suggested a revival of the old 'discipline' approach from the 3rd grade onward in view of the explosion of knowledge. It emphasises the development of concepts relating to the different subjects from a very early stage of education. For the method, the commission has recommended the adoption of dynamic methods suited to the needs of the topic in hand.

The Explosion of knowledge has a bearing on life as it is lived today and it has to be examined whether the integrated approach *to teaching can meet this new demand for increased knowledge or we will have to shift to the formal discipline approach advocated by the Commission ? In case the discipline approach is accepted it may also be examined what impact will it make on the relation between learning and life ? It has further to be examined whether the knowledge has to be imparted through the correlation technique, through the systematic and logical teaching of the subjects or through a combination of both ? The study group may also consider the factors which should determine the dynamic methods. What are the dynamic methods suitable for elementary schools ? Will correlated teaching be considered as a dynamic method ?*

4. Crafts occupy a place of great importance in Basic education. Besides serving as one of the three centres of correlation it also aimed at including a respect for manual work and at establishing a link between education and productivity. It also aimed at developing a scientific outlook and providing opportunities for the students to try out new ideas which would lead to the growth of improved practices of production. The crafts for this purpose had to be selected on the basis of their educational potentialities and their suitability to the local environment.

The Education Commission is very emphatic on relating education to productivity and it also acknowledges that this aspect has always been greatly stressed in Basic education. The Education Commission however observed that in practice Basic education is largely forzen round certain crafts. The objectives of crafts envisaged in Basic education have also been accepted by the Education Commission (Para 1.31). However with a view to giving a 'Forward look' to the craft programmes, it has suggested a reorganisation of this programme under the nomenclature of "Work experience". 'Work experience' is not supposed to be used as a medium of education although it has been recommended that it should form an integral part of education. Work experience has to be provided at the actual centres of production i.e. at home, farm or a factory. It has been further stressed that the spirit of science and technology should be gradually built in the operations of the craft work.

It has now to be examined how far the concept of work experience given by the Education Commission deviates from the crafts programme of Basic education ? It has further to be examined whether the suggested programme of work experience can lead to the achievement of the objectives put before it ? In case work experience has not to be used as a medium of education, it is worth considering what incentives will it provide to the child to participate in it ? It has *to be further examined if mere participation of the pupils in work, in farms or factories would lead to the growth of the experimental outlook so much needed in the present age to improve techniques of production ? This study group may also examine the practicability of introducing work experience and suggest what actually should be done to give forward look at the craft programmes ? The principles governing the selection of work experience may also be considered.*

5. Basic education stressed the importance of 8 years of compulsory primary education for the age group 6-14 years. It further emphasised the need to keep mother tongue as the medium of instruction. The schools had to establish a functional relationship with the society and serve as Extension agencies for the improvement of the Community. Except for the duration of the course the Education Commission has accepted both the approaches. It may not be, therefore, considered necessary to deliberate on these issues. On the duration of the course the Commission has recommended a seven or eight year course with articulation into two stage viz. lower primary and upper primary with classes I to IV or V and IV or V to VII or VIII respectively. It may be recalled that Basic education aimed at fulfilling the two needs of a trasitory and a terminal stage in the 8 years course by providing an opportunity to acquire some pre-vocational skills particularly for those who would not go in for further education. The Education Commission in its 10 year programme of general Education envisages separate vocational courses for those who give up education after the 7 or 8 year course.

It has now to be considered what should be the duration of Elementary education particularly in view of the Compulsory education programme ? What place wauld the seven or eight year course have in the total ten year programme of general education ? In view of the stringent economic conditions in the country it has to be further examined whether it would be desirable to organise vocational courses separately for those who give up education at the end of compulsorv stage ? It has to be further examined whether the non attendance in vocational courses by students who give up education after the compulsory stage would not hamper the realisation of the objective of compulsory education i.e. equiping the child to adjust better in the life including vocational pursuits ?

6. The study group may deliberate on the issues raised above with reference to the programmes of Basic education and the recommendations of the Education Commission with a view to finding out their suitability and practicability in the present day conditions.

APPENDIX-II

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